

Existing law creates the Fishermen's Gear Compensation Fund to pay for claims suffered by commercial fishermen as a result of hitting or snagging an obstruction or hazard in the waters of the state resulting from natural occurrences, oil and gas activities, or other activities where the owner of the obstruction is unknown.

New law provides for a deposit of \$250,000 from the Fishermen's Gear Compensation Fund on July 1, 1999 and again on July 1, 2000, into the Underwater Obstruction Removal Fund. Authorizes the department to seek to match those funds from any available source.

New law prohibits payments to be made from the Fishermen's Gear Compensation Fund for claims at a site certified by the commissioner of conservation to have been cleared. Provides that when four or more claims have been made after a site has been certified as clear, DNR shall revisit the site and locate and remove the obstruction, if the department determines removal is feasible.

Existing law creates the Louisiana Underwater Obstruction Removal Program to provide for identification, inventory, and removal of underwater obstructions which are hazardous to navigation. Further creates the Underwater Obstruction Removal Fund within the state treasury. Further provides for sources of monies to be deposited into the fund; and administration and uses of monies in the fund.

Prior law required that the Louisiana Underwater Obstruction Removal Program terminate July 1, 1999.

New law extends the termination of the Louisiana Underwater Obstruction Removal Program to July 1, 2001.

Effective July 1, 1999.

(Amends §3 of Act 666 of 1997; Adds R.S. 30:101.9(C)(4), R.S. 56:700.2(A)(4), and 700.4(C)(4))